

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1102

Introduced by Assembly Member Yee

February 20, 2003

An act to add Section 13519.25 to the Penal Code, relating to peace officers.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1102, as introduced, Yee. Peace officers: training relating to the mentally ill.

Existing law requires the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, in the Department of Justice, to include in the basic training course for peace officers, adequate instruction in the handling of persons with developmental disabilities or mental illness, or both.

This bill would require the commission to include in the regular basic training course 4 10-hour consecutive days, for a total of 40 hours, of training for law enforcement officers in the handling of persons with mental illness. The goal of the intensive training would be to enable law enforcement personnel to deal more effectively with situations involving mentally ill persons. The bill would state the specific topics to be covered in each day of the training. By increasing training for local peace officers, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement, including the creation of a State Mandates Claims Fund to pay the costs of mandates that do not exceed \$1,000,000 statewide and other procedures for claims whose statewide costs exceed \$1,000,000.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares the
2 following:

3 (a) Many of the incoming calls received by police and law
4 enforcement departments involve situations with seriously
5 emotionally disturbed and mentally ill persons. Poverty,
6 homelessness, substance addiction, and mental illness are not in
7 themselves police problems. They are health and economic
8 problems that become law enforcement problems because of
9 inadequate funding and manpower resources and community
10 stigma towards the mentally ill.

11 (b) Beginning in the 1970's, the number of available state
12 psychiatric beds was reduced. Many mentally ill persons received
13 new medications that helped to control some of the symptoms of
14 severe mental illness and gave rise to the hope that a shift of
15 funding from state hospitals to community services would help
16 mentally ill persons live in the local community as productively as
17 their illness allowed. Many county mental health budgets were
18 significantly reduced but community treatment services were
19 never sufficiently funded. This led to a lack of adequate mental
20 health treatment, housing and support services for the seriously
21 mentally ill.

22 (c) Until more resources are allocated to community treatment
23 services, health care providers and law enforcement will share
24 joint responsibility for dealing with severely mentally ill persons.
25 The Police Crisis Intervention Training Program used by the San
26 Francisco Police Department is an example of one joint effort. It
27 is not designed to make law enforcement officers be social workers
28 or provide mental health diagnoses, but to give them additional
29 resources and skills with which to perform their jobs more
30 effectively.



(d) It is critical that law enforcement mental health sensitivity training be developed for the local community. There are as many differences, if not more, as there are similarities in each community regarding issues involving the police, mental health providers, and mentally ill persons. Police, staff from community mental health services and agencies, mental health advocates, and mental health consumers must work together to create the training and curriculum that is customized for each particular community. Service providers and mental health professionals from the community are generally very effective training facilitators because they speak about the very same people that local law enforcement officers frequently encounter.

SEC. 2. Section 13519.25 is added to the Penal Code, to read:

13519.25. (a) The Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) shall include in the regular basic training course four 10-hour consecutive days, for a total of 40 hours, of training for law enforcement officers in the handling of persons with mental illness. The goal of the intensive training is to enable law enforcement personnel to deal more effectively with situations involving mentally ill persons. The intensive courses and workshops shall provide training in recognizing signs and symptoms of mental illness and provide information to officers about accessing and utilizing available community resources.

(b) Day one of the training shall disseminate information relating to basic areas of mental illness including, but not limited to, schizophrenia, personality disorders, cognitive disorders, suicide intervention, dual diagnosis, and posttraumatic stress disorder.

(c) Day two of the training shall consist of presentations from mental health consumers and family members followed by the officers performing onsite visits to a number of local community programs.

(d) Day three of the training shall consist of workshops to address mental health as it relates to children, adolescents, and young adults, the elderly, the developmentally disabled, other cultures, and legal issues.

(e) Day four of the training shall cover effective communication, listening, de-escalation, crisis intervention, and role-playing techniques and would conclude with a recognition ceremony for the participating officers.

1 SEC. 3. Notwithstanding Section 17610 of the Government
2 Code, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this
3 act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local
4 agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant
5 to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title
6 2 of the Government Code. If the statewide cost of the claim for
7 reimbursement does not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000),
8 reimbursement shall be made from the State Mandates Claims
9 Fund.

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